



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: Rep. Joel Kleefisch

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(888) 534-0038

Social Media...The Good, The Bad, The Apology

You could certainly argue the world was a better place before social media. People actually spoke with each other, even looked one another in the eye. The new way of communicating via texting and messaging has drastically reduced interpersonal communication as we used to know it. In fact, if things happened in a different order, I'm pretty sure a great deal would be different. If texting was invented first, there's no doubt the advent of talking on the phone would be the preferred method. I can see my daughters now, "Hey Jenna, I don't have to text back and forth with you anymore, we can actually talk to each other on this phone thingy." Well, here we are in the order in which it was received.

Don't get me wrong, Facebook is great for reconnecting, sharing pics with loved ones, and planning. Twitter is great for keeping up with current, even live events, but there are also huge risks. Predators are lurking in every social media site, waiting to victimize our information, our identities, and even our children with little to no consequence.

So what does this have to do with apologies? Well, my belief is that life is too short to hold grudges. Face it, we're all human and capable of massive screw ups. In politics, there are multitudes of disagreements, screw ups, egos, and bad feelings where philosophies and personalities divide. Right and wrong are often a giant gray area. Years ago, I would not have employed the effort of "making things right" the way I do now. As you get older, many of the things that would have hastened the end of a friendship or negotiation seem trivial now. It's difficult to apologize when you're certain you're right or didn't do anything wrong, and these viewpoints may not be as obvious to the person on the other side. That's why I find swallowing a bit of pride and apologizing will go a long way in breaking an impasse.

That's where social media can be a tremendous tool. While apologizing or reopening the lines of communication can be a daunting task in person or on the phone, it's not all that hard to click your way back into the graces of the estranged. A subtle "like" on someone's family picture on Facebook can tell them, "Hey, I'm still interested in what's happening in your life," without saying a word. A comment about their culinary post can say, "That looks tasty to me too." Not always, but very often you'll find them clicking and "liking" something you shared too. It's an easy way to open the lines.

The next step is interpersonal communication, especially with those whose viewpoints may be different than your own. That's why I have chosen to work across the aisle, in a bipartisan manner, with those from both sides of the political fence. This session, 21 bills that I authored received strong bipartisan support, and all of them were signed into law. In addition, we started a bipartisan Sportsmen's Caucus last session, with members from both sides of the aisle participating in events, working on legislation, and, most importantly, working together. Hopefully this will inspire you to reach out and mend fences as well.

Sure, this column isn't going to change the world or likely lead to any massive revolution, but remember, humility and kindness go a long way in repairing strained relationships, and relationships are the foundation for getting things done.

Click "like" and "share" if you agree!

*Rep. Joel Kleefisch can be reached at P.O. Box 8952, Madison, WI 53702-8952,
or by calling toll-free 1 (888) 534-0038, or by email at
Rep.Kleefisch@legis.wi.gov*